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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [AF](#) [SW](#)  
SUBJECT: SHRAPNEL FROM SWEDEN'S AFGHAN DESK OFFICER

Classified By: PolCouns Marc Koehler for reasons 1.4 (B) & (D).

(C) On December 8, Poloff met with Swedish MFA Afghanistan Desk Officer Mathias Otterstedt to discuss a variety of Afghanistan-related topics, including Finnish and Turkish participation in Sweden's PRT, increasing Western pressure on Karzai, and improving coordination between the EU and the United States. He made the following points:

-- Finnish PRT Cooperation: Rumors of Finland taking over part of the Swedish PRT have been around for a long time, but he doubts such would occur in the near term. He gave three main reasons: 1) the Finns lack the funds needed to manage fully part of the PRT; 2) the Finnish government is too divided over its presence in Afghanistan to permit increased support; and, 3) the Finnish Armed Forces, which are "very influential (more than in Sweden)," are focused on Russia and the Baltic, "not on international crisis management."

-- Turkish PRT Cooperation: There is a good chance the Turks will provide assistance to the Swedish PRT, but such would be solely civilian and not military. Turkish troops will be present with a mandate "only to protect the civilian aid workers" and will use the same force protection model pattern as in their Wardak PRT, outside of Kabul.

-- 2010 Elections: Sweden understands that President Karzai, according to the constitution, needs to announce the timing of the spring elections by late December. However, Otterstedt said Sweden would prefer the elections to be postponed a year, or at least six months. Holding elections in April/May would be "political suicide" due to the mass corruption surrounding the presidential elections. Because UNAMA stated that at least three years are needed to remedy the corruption problems, the Swedes, and many Europeans, want the decision to postpone elections to come from Karzai himself, who is reluctant to be seen as "the guy to break the constitution." Kai Eide and General McChrystal, among others, need to appeal to Karzai's "vanity" and encourage him to be the "father of the nation" and take the step forward. If the West tells Karzai it cannot get the funding and logistics together by the spring, then Karzai will be forced to delay the elections, suggested Otterstedt.

-- Future Afghanistan Meetings: Sweden wants to see a biannual general assembly of all donors. Sweden also wants to create a steering group for all regional players, he said, in which there will be subcommittees for, e.g., military strategy and development, made up of the top countries in those fields. He said the British are drafting a plan for these initiatives.

-- "What the EU needs from the United States": Sweden is concerned that Washington is treating the EU as separate nations, focusing on talks with France and the UK, and ignoring other countries, Otterstedt said. He continued that this "splits the EU up and reduces the ability of the EU to implement its Afghanistan Action Plan." Unless the EU is engaged as a single entity, Member States "will find it more difficult (and be more reluctant) to work with the United

States."

-- Kai Eide's Replacement: While not yet public, Sweden's Staffan de Mistura will be named Kai Eide's successor as Head of UNAMA, Otterstedt offered. Currently the UN Special Representative to Iraq, de Mistura has long career as a Swedish and UN diplomat.  
BARZUN